

Sunday, 19 May 2013

## Israel acts to deny Hezbollah of Syrian arms, says Netanyahu



Israel is “acting” to prevent Syrian weapons reaching Lebanon’s Hezbollah and will continue to do so, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday. His remarks came two weeks after Israel carried out air strikes near Damascus, which a senior Israeli source said were aimed at preventing the transfer of sophisticated Iranian arms to Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Netanyahu said the Middle East was going through its most sensitive period for decades, with the conflict in Syria at the centre of the turmoil. “We are closely following developments and changes there, and we are prepared for any scenario,” he said at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting. “The government of Israel is acting in a responsible, determined and prudent manner to ensure the supreme interest of the State of Israel which is the security of its citizens according to the policy we set: to prevent as far as possible leakage of advanced weapons to Hezbollah and terrorist elements,” he said. “We will ensure the security interests of the citizens of Israel in the future.” Israel has repeatedly warned that it would not permit the transfer of advanced weapons or chemical agents to Hezbollah or to any other militant groups. On January 30, another strike on Syrian soil, which also was attributed to Israel by regional sources, destroyed what military intelligence officials say was a shipment of Russian-made SA-17 anti-aircraft missiles destined for Hezbollah.